Old building deserves some TLC

Just a few weeks ago, a building with a long history in the Camas-Washougal area took a pretty major hit.

On Monday, May 4, an early morning two-alarm fire gutted a portion of the inside of the old Riverside Bowl building on Northeast Third Avenue. An illegal campfire set by transients is likely to blame.

Almost immediately, fire department officials said, stories began to surface about the history of the building. People reminisced about attending festive events at the dance hall that was once the popular place to be on Friday and Saturday nights. Built in the 1940s, it was a roller skating rink, and the site has also been home to what was known as Wagon Wheel Park. Most recently it was a bowling alley — once a popular spot, it seemed to fall victim to progress, as a flashier option opened in Vancouver.

Since its closure, the blue building with boarded up windows has been a target of graffiti and vandals. To say the least, this old facility is now in need of some major tender loving care.

Located along a major arterial roadway, near a skateboard park and adjacent to the Washougal River Greenway, with the right developer who can overcome some challenges, this site could once again be something special.

Without a doubt, the old Riverside Bowl building has a history that is worth remembering, celebrating and continuing. The new owners should do all they can to breathe some life into this once vibrant facility.

— Heather Acheson